

PRESS RELEASE

House Armed Services Committee Bob Stump, Chairman

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 10, 2002

CONTACT

Ryan Vaart

Meghan Wedd

(202) 225-2539

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BOB STUMP ON MARK-UP OF HR 5005, THE HOMELAND SECURITY ACT OF 2002

“The committee meets this morning to consider H.R. 5005, the Homeland Security Act of 2002. The committee has this bill under sequential referral only until this Friday thus necessitating that we act today.

“I should also note that the committee is acting today under an unconventional process established by House Resolution 449 to expedite consideration of this complicated legislation. Under this resolution, the committee will not be reporting its recommendations to the House, but rather to a select committee established solely for the purpose of considering this special legislation.

“The bill before us is the introduced version of the President’s legislative proposal to create a new Department of Homeland Security. This proposal provides for the essential authorities to create this new organization as well as a general outline of how the homeland security responsibilities that are currently scattered across the federal government would be consolidated under one roof.

“While the overall impact of this proposal involves over 170,000 federal employees and billions of dollars, our jurisdictional slice is relatively modest. For the Department of Defense, the proposal would involve only two programs. One that currently exists -- the National Communications System; and one that does not yet exist - the National Bio-Warfare Defense Center. For the Department of Energy, the proposal is more complex as it proposes to move several selected slices of programs from within the National Laboratory system to the new department.

“In general, the outline of the Administration proposal in our area of jurisdiction is sound. Most everything that is being proposed for transfer makes logical sense and represents capabilities that the new department will need in order to properly accomplish its mission. However, parsing through the details of how to execute such a transfer of programs in a way that properly captures what deserves to move but also does not do lasting damage to the ongoing national security missions of these departments is a significant challenge and there is always room for improvement.

– continued –

“Accordingly, I intend to offer a manager’s amendment that makes a number of fixes and enhancements to better accomplish this goal. A copy of this amendment was provided to all committee members on Monday. I will cover the contents of this amendment in greater detail when we get to that point in the mark-up.

“Let me conclude by saying that I appreciate the cooperation of all members involved in this effort. I understand that we may have a handful of other amendments to consider and I urge all members to stay close to the proceedings as we may have recorded votes at any point during the mark-up.

“Finally, I would remind members that the task before us is to mark-up and issue recommendations on those matters that fall within our jurisdiction. Similarly, the rules of germaneness do apply to this legislation and we should keep our efforts properly focused to those matters that fall within those parameters as established by the Rules of the House.

“While I am certain we all have valuable perspectives on the many other issues in this bill, our job today is to keep focused on our pieces in order for the process to work properly.”

###